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EXAMINER

YOUNG, JOHN L

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3622

DATE MAILED: 10/22/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.
09/345,092

Applicant(s)
Walker et al.

Examiner
John Young

Art Unit
3622



-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on Jul 24, 2002
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-44 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-44 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). _____ 6) ☐ Other:

Art Unit: 2162

REQUEST FOR CONTINUED EXAMINATION (RCE)

1. **The request for continued examination (RCE) filed on 07/24/2002 under 37 CFR 1.114 based on parent Application No. 09/345,092 is acceptable and an RCE has been established. An action on the RCE follows:**

STATUS

2. Claims 1-44 are pending.

FINAL REJECTION

DRAWINGS

3. The review process for drawings that are included with applications on filing has been modified in view of the new requirement to publish applications at eighteen months after the filing date of applications, or any priority date claimed under 35 U.S.C. §§119, 120, 121, or 365.

This application has been filed with drawings that have been approved by the official draftsman, and said drawings are acceptable for examination and publication purposes.

ORIGINAL CLAIM REJECTIONS

CLAIM REJECTIONS — 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Art Unit: 2162

4. Claims 1-40 & 43-44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Malaspina, US 5,544,784 (8/13/1996) (herein referred to as “Malaspina”) in view of Bernard et al., US 5,918,213 (6/29/1999) (herein referred to as “Bernard”).

As per claim 1, Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “A method of automatically dispensing a product to a customer, comprising the steps of . . . receiving a product selection from the customer . . . determining whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer . . . presenting an alternate product offer message if said product selection so qualifies . . . determining if the customer has accepted said alternate product offer; and . . . dispensing a first product that corresponds to said alternate product offer if the customer has so accepted, or . . . dispensing a second product that corresponds to said product selection if the customer has not so accepted.”

Malaspina does not explicitly show: “dispensing a second product that corresponds to said product selection if the customer has not so accepted. . . .” even though Malaspina suggests same.

Bernard (FIG. 24; FIG. 25; and FIG. 44) shows elements that suggest: “dispensing a second product that corresponds to said product selection if the customer has not so accepted. . . .”

Bernard proposes optional product dispensing modifications that would have applied to the system described by Malaspina. It would have been obvious to one of

Art Unit: 2162

ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the modifications of Bernard with the system of Malaspina because such combination would have provided a means of *“browsing . . . to learn more about products which are popular or in great demand but about which the customer may not be aware.”* (See Bernard (col. 4, ll. 32-34)).

As per claim 2, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 1. (See the rejection of claim 1 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest:

“determining that said product selection does not qualify for an alternate product offer . . . determining . . . whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer.”

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of “a database is provided . . . containing at least one decision rule, and step (b) includes the steps of . . . determining if any decision rule in said database is associated with said product selection . . . if no decision rule in said database is associated with said product selection, then, determining that said product selection does not qualify for an alternate product offer . . . if at least one decision rule in said database is associated with said product selection, the choosing one of said at least one associated decision rule, and, determining from said chosen decision rule whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer.”

Art Unit: 2162

Bernard (FIG. 1; FIG. 4; FIG. 6; FIG. 17; FIG. 19; FIG. 20A; FIG. 22; FIG. 23; FIG. 24; FIG. 25; FIG. 28; FIG. 29; FIG. 36; FIG. 41; and FIG. 44) shows elements that suggest: “determining that said product selection does not qualify for an alternate product offer . . . determining . . . whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer.”

Bernard proposes database and decision rule modifications that would have applied to the system described by Malaspina. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the modifications of Bernard with the system of Malaspina because such combination would have provided a means of “*browsing . . . to learn more about products which are popular or in great demand but about which the customer may not be aware.*” (See Bernard (col. 4, ll. 32-34)).

As per claim 3, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 2. (See the rejection of claim 2 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “wherein a plurality of decision rules . . . are identified . . . as being associated with said product selection, and wherein the step of choosing comprises . . . choosing one of said plurality of decision rules according to a predetermined rule selection hierarchy.”

Art Unit: 2162

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of “a database. . . .” even though Malaspina suggests same.

Bernard (FIG. 1; FIG. 4; FIG. 6; FIG. 17; FIG. 19; FIG. 20A; FIG. 22; FIG. 23; FIG. 24; FIG. 25; FIG. 28; FIG. 29; FIG. 36; FIG. 41; and FIG. 44) shows elements that suggest: “a database. . . .”

Bernard proposes database and decision rule modifications that would have applied to the system described by Malaspina. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the modifications of Bernard with the system of Malaspina because such combination would have provided a means of “*browsing . . . to learn more about products which are popular or in great demand but about which the customer may not be aware.*” (See Bernard (col. 4, ll. 32-34)).

As per claim 4, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 1. (See the rejection of claim 1 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “choosing an alternate product. . . .”

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “determining an acceptance rate of said chosen alternate product in relation to said product selection, and . . . determining whether

Art Unit: 2162

said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer based on said acceptance rate.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “determining an acceptance rate of said chosen alternate product in relation to said product selection, and . . . determining whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer based on said acceptance rate. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such determinations (for example, as in targeting Internet advertisements and incentives to consumers) were well known in the art.

As per claim 5, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 4.

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest:

“determining that said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer. . . .”

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “determining that said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer if said acceptance rate is greater than a predetermined value.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “determining that said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer if said acceptance rate is greater than a predetermined value. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such determinations (for example,

Art Unit: 2162

as in targeting Internet advertisements and incentives to consumers) were well known in the art.

As per claim 6, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 1. (See the rejection of claim 1 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “there is at least one product item associated with said product selection . . . choosing an alternate product having at least one product item associated therewith . . . determining that said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer. . . .”

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “an expiration date. . . .” even though Malaspina suggests same.

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “wherein there is at least one product item associated with said product selection and each of said at least one product item has an expiration date associated therewith, and wherein step (b) includes the steps of . . . choosing an alternate product having at least one product item associated therewith . . . determining an expiration date for a predetermined one of said at least one product item associated with said alternate product, and . . . determining that said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer if said determined expiration date of the predetermined alternate product item is a later date than said expiration date of the predetermined alternate product item. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary

Art Unit: 2162

skill at the time of the invention because such determinations (for example, as in batteries having expiration dates) were well known in the art.

As per claim 7, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 6. (See the rejection of claim 6 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “said predetermined one of said at least one product item associated with said alternate product is a next vendible product item.”

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “said alternate product. . . .” even though Malaspina suggests same.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention that if “a similar battery is requested, then one is located . . . and dispensed. . . .” would have been selected in accordance with “said alternate product. . . .” because such alternatives would have provided customers with price and performance options.

As per claim 8, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 1. (See the rejection of claim 1 supra).

Art Unit: 2162

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “choosing an alternate product having at least one product item associated therewith. . . .”

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “an expiration date. . . .” even though Malaspina suggests same.

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “each of said at least one product item having an expiration date associated therewith . . . determining an item expiration date for a predetermined one of said at least one product item associated with said alternate product, and . . . using said item expiration date to determine whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such determinations (for example, as in batteries having expiration dates) were well known in the art.

As per claim 9, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 1. (See the rejection of claim 1 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “at least one product item associated with said product selection. . . .”

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “an expiration date. . . .” even though Malaspina suggests same.

Art Unit: 2162

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “determining an item expiration date for a predetermined one of said at least one product item associated with said product selection, and . . . using said item expiration date to determine whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such determinations (for example, as in batteries having expiration dates) were well known in the art.

As per claim-10, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 1. (See the rejection of claim 1 supra).

Malaspina (col. 1, ll. 55-60; FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “wherein there is a profit margin associated with said product selection, and wherein step (b) includes the steps of . . . choosing an alternate product . . . obtaining a profit margin associated with said alternate product. . . .”

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “determining that said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer if said alternate product profit margin is greater than said profit margin associated with said product selection.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “determining that said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer if said alternate product profit margin is greater than said profit margin associated with said

Art Unit: 2162

product selection. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such determinations were well known in the art.

As per claim 11, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 10.

(See the rejection of claim 10 supra).

Malaspina (col. 1, ll. 55-60; FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “wherein there is at least one product item associated with said chosen alternate product. . . .”

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “an expiration date. . . .” even though Malaspina suggests same.

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “wherein each of said at least one product item associated with said chosen alternate product has an expiration date. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such determinations (for example, as in batteries having expiration dates) were well known in the art.

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “wherein said profit margin associated with said alternate product is chosen to be a function of said expiration date.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “wherein said profit margin associated with said alternate product is chosen to be a function of said

Art Unit: 2162

expiration date. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such choices were well known in the art.

As per claim 12, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 1. (See the rejection of claim 1 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “selecting an alternate product . . . determining an available quantity of vendible product items associated with said product selection. . . .”

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “using said available quantity of vendible product items associated with said product selection to determine whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “using said available quantity of vendible product items associated with said product selection to determine whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such choices were well known in the art.

As per claim 13, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 12. (See the rejection of claim 12 supra).

Art Unit: 2162

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of “a database is provided . . . containing a t count of vendible items associated with at least said product selection and wherein step (b2) includes . . . determining from said database an available quantity of vendible items associated with said product selection.”

Bernard (FIG. 1; FIG. 4; FIG. 6; FIG. 17; FIG. 19; FIG. 20A; FIG. 22; FIG. 23; FIG. 24; FIG. 25; FIG. 28; FIG. 29; FIG. 36; FIG. 41; and FIG. 44) shows elements that suggest: “a database is provided . . . containing a t count of vendible items associated with at least said product selection and wherein step (b2) includes . . . determining from said database an available quantity of vendible items associated with said product selection.”

Bernard proposes database and decision rule modifications that would have applied to the system described by Malaspina. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the modifications of Bernard with the system of Malaspina because such combination would have provided a means of “*browsing . . . to learn more about products which are popular or in great demand but about which the customer may not be aware.*” (See Bernard (col. 4, ll. 32-34)).

As per claim 14, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 1. (See the rejection of claim 1 supra).

Art Unit: 2162

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “selecting an alternate product . . . determining an available quantity of vendible product items associated with said product selection. . . .”

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “using said available quantity of vendible product items associated with said alternate product to determine whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “using said available quantity of vendible product items associated with said alternate product to determine whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such choices were well known in the art.

As per claim 15, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 1. (See the rejection of claim 1 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “choosing an alternate product. . . .”

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “determining a demand rate for said product selection . . . determining a demand rate for said alternate product . . . comparing said demand rate for said product selection and said demand rate for said alternate product,

Art Unit: 2162

and . . . determining based on said step of comparing whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “determining a demand rate for said product selection . . . determining a demand rate for said alternate product . . . comparing said demand rate for said product selection and said demand rate for said alternate product, and . . . determining based on said step of comparing whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such determinations were notoriously well known in the art.

As per claim 16, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 1. (See the rejection of claim 1 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “selecting an alternate product. . . .”

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “determining a demand rate for said product selection . . . comparing said demand rate for with a predetermined rate, and . . . determining based on said step of comparing whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “determining a demand rate for said product selection . . . comparing said demand rate for

Art Unit: 2162

with a predetermined rate, and . . . determining based on said step of comparing whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such determinations were notoriously well known in the art.

As per claim 17, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 1. (See the rejection of claim 1 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “selecting an alternate product, said alternate product having at least one product item associated therewith. . . .”

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “determining a number of days until expiration for a predetermined one of said at least one product item associated with said alternate product . . . comparing said number of days until expiration with a predetermined number of days, and . . . determining based on said step of comparing whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “determining a number of days until expiration for a predetermined one of said at least one product item associated with said alternate product. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such determinations (for example, as in batteries having expiration dates) were well known in the art.

Art Unit: 2162

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “comparing said number of days until expiration with a predetermined number of days, and . . . determining based on said step of comparing whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “comparing said number of days until expiration with a predetermined number of days, and . . . determining based on said step of comparing whether said product selection qualifies for an alternate product offer. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such determinations were well known in the art.

As per claim 18, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 1. (See the rejection of claim 1 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “wherein said alternate product offer message includes an offer of an incentive for the customer to purchase another item.

Malaspina does not explicitly recite: “wherein said alternate product offer message includes an offer of an incentive for the customer to purchase another item.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “said alternate product offer message includes an offer of an incentive for the customer to purchase another item. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such incentives were well known in the art.

Art Unit: 2162

As per claim 19, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 18.

(See the rejection of claim 18 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “said offer of an incentive is an offer of a future incentive.”

Malaspina does not explicitly recite: “said offer of an incentive is an offer of a future incentive.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “said offer of an incentive is an offer of a future incentive. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such incentives were well known in the art.

As per claim 20, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 18.

(See the rejection of claim 18 supra).

Malaspina does not explicitly recite: “said offer of an incentive is accompanied by a presentation of a coupon code representative of said offer of an incentive.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “said offer of an incentive is accompanied by a presentation of a coupon code representative of said offer of an incentive. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such offers of incentive were well known in the art.

Art Unit: 2162

As per claim 21, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 20.

(See the rejection of claim 20 supra).

Malaspina does not explicitly recite: “said coupon code comprises a character sequence.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “said coupon code comprises a character sequence. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such character sequences were well known in the art.

As per claim 22, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 21.

(See the rejection of claim 21 supra).

Malaspina does not explicitly recite: “said coupon code comprises a character sequence.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “said coupon code comprises a character sequence. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such character sequences were well known in the art.

As per claim 23, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 18.

(See the rejection of claim 18 supra).

Art Unit: 2162

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “said another item is a product item associated with said alternate product offer.”

Malaspina does not explicitly recite: “said another item is a product item associated with said alternate product offer.”

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention that the disclosure of Malaspina would have been selected in accordance with “said another item is a product item associated with said alternate product offer. . . .” because such an alternative would have provided customers with price and performance options.

As per claim 24, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 18. (See the rejection of claim 18 supra).

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “said offer of an incentive is an offer of a discount in price.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of an “offer of an incentive is an offer of a discount in price. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such marketing incentives were well known in the art.

Art Unit: 2162

As per claim 25, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 24.

(See the rejection of claim 24 supra).

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “said offer of a discount is an offer of a present discount.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of an “offer of a discount is an offer of a present discount. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such marketing incentives were well known in the art.

As per claim 26, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 24.

(See the rejection of claim 24 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest an: “alternate product offer.”

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of an: “offer of a discount in price includes an offer of a discount for an item corresponding to said alternate product offer.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of an “offer of a discount in price includes an offer of a discount for an item corresponding to said alternate product offer. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such marketing incentives were well known in the art.

Art Unit: 2162

As per claim 27, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 1. (See the rejection of claim 1 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest an: “alternate product offer message. . . .”

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “a plurality of different alternate products.”

Bernard (col. 4, ll. 32-34; FIG. 17; FIG. 19; FIG. 20A; FIG. 22; FIG. 23; FIG. 24; FIG. 25; FIG. 28; FIG. 29; and FIG. 36) shows elements that suggest: “wherein said alternate product offer message includes an offer of a plurality of different alternate products.”

Bernard proposes plural alternate product modifications that would have applied to the system described by Malaspina. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the modifications of Bernard with the system of Malaspina because such combination would have provided a means of “*browsing . . . to learn more about products which are popular or in great demand but about which the customer may not be aware.*” (See Bernard (col. 4, ll. 32-34)).

As per claim 28, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 1. (See the rejection of claim 1 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest:

Art Unit: 2162

“determining whether said product selection qualifies for a further alternate product offer . . . presenting a further alternate product offer message if said product selection so qualifies . . . determining if the customer has accepted said further alternate product offer . . . dispensing a third product that corresponds to said further alternate product offer if the customer has so accepted, and . . . dispensing a second product that corresponds to said product selection if the customer has not so accepted.”

Malaspina does not explicitly show an: “dispensing a third product that corresponds to said further alternate product offer if the customer has so accepted, and . . . dispensing a second product that corresponds to said product selection if the customer has not so accepted. . . .” even though Malaspina suggests same.

Bernard (FIG. 24; FIG. 25; and FIG. 44) shows elements that suggest: dispensing a third product that corresponds to said further alternate product offer if the customer has so accepted, and . . . dispensing a second product that corresponds to said product selection if the customer has not so accepted. . . .”

Bernard proposes additional optional product dispensing modifications that would have applied to the system described by Malaspina. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the modifications of Bernard with the system of Malaspina because such combination would have provided a means of “*browsing . . . to learn more about products which are popular or in great demand but about which the customer may not be aware.*” (See Bernard (col. 4, ll. 32-34)).

Art Unit: 2162

As per claim 29, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 1. (See the rejection of claim 1 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1 and FIG. 4) discloses a “CUSTOMER INTERFACE” (FIG. 1, el. 12) and “COIN SLOT”; “BILL SLOT”; “BILL COUNTER”; and “CHANGE ACTUATOR” (FIG. 4).

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “receiving an amount of money from the customer.”

Malaspina does not explicitly recite: “receiving an amount of money from the customer. . . .” even though Malaspina suggests same.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention that the disclosures of Malaspina cited above would have been selected in accordance with “receiving an amount of money from the customer. . . .” because such means for “receiving money from the customer. . . .” were well known in the art.

As per claim 30, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 29. (See the rejection of claim 29 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 1 and FIG. 4) discloses a “CUSTOMER INTERFACE” (FIG. 1, el. 12) and “COIN SLOT”; “BILL SLOT”; “BILL COUNTER”; and “CHANGE ACTUATOR” (FIG. 4).

Art Unit: 2162

Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 4; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “said amount of money is greater than a price of said product selection and wherein said alternate product offer message includes an offer to purchase an alternate product having a higher price than said price of said product selection.”

Malaspina does not explicitly recite: “said amount of money is greater than a price of said product selection and wherein said alternate product offer message includes an offer to purchase an alternate product having a higher price than said price of said product selection. . . .” even though Malaspina suggests same.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention that the disclosures of Malaspina cited above would have been selected in accordance with “said amount of money is greater than a price of said product selection and wherein said alternate product offer message includes an offer to purchase an alternate product having a higher price than said price of said product selection. . . .” because such selection would have provided means for receiving a greater amount of money than a price of a product selection. And such means were well known in the art at the time of the invention.

As per claim 31, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 30. (See the rejection of claim 30 supra).

Art Unit: 2162

Malaspina does not explicitly recite: “said offer to purchase said alternate product includes an offer to purchase said alternate product at a special price approximately equal to said amount of money received from the customer.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “said offer to purchase said alternate product includes an offer to purchase said alternate product at a special price approximately equal to said amount of money received from the customer. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such bargaining incentives were well known in the art.

As per claim 32, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 31. (See the rejection of claim 31 supra).

Malaspina does not explicitly recite: “said special price is a discounted price.”

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “said special price is a discounted price. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such bargaining incentives were well known in the art.

As per claim 33, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the method of claim 1. (See the rejection of claim 1 supra).

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “selecting a plurality of products. . . .”

Art Unit: 2162

Bernard (col. 4, ll. 32-34; FIG. 17; FIG. 19; FIG. 20A; FIG. 22; FIG. 23; FIG. 24; FIG. 25; FIG. 28; FIG. 29; and FIG. 36) shows elements that suggest: “selecting a plurality of products. . . .”

Bernard proposes plural product selection modifications that would have applied to the system described by Malaspina. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the modifications of Bernard with the system of Malaspina because such combination would have provided a means of *“browsing . . . to learn more about products which are popular or in great demand but about which the customer may not be aware.”* (See Bernard (col. 4, ll. 32-34)).

Malaspina (col. 1, ll. 55-60; FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “a profit margin associated. . . .” with the products.

Malaspina lacks explicit mention of: “selecting a plurality of products, each of said plurality of products having a profit margin associated therewith . . . determining which of said associated profit margins is a largest profit margin . . . identifying which of said plurality of products is associated with said largest profit margin . . . selecting for presentation in an alternate product offer message any product so identified, and . . . presenting said alternate product offer message if said product selection so qualifies. . . .” even though Malaspina suggests same.

“Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of “selecting a plurality of products, each of said plurality of products having a profit margin associated

Art Unit: 2162

therewith . . . determining which of said associated profit margins is a largest profit margin . . . identifying which of said plurality of products is associated with said largest profit margin . . . selecting for presentation in an alternate product offer message any product so identified, and . . . presenting said alternate product offer message if said product selection so qualifies. . . .” were expected in the art by one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention because such determinations were well known in the art.

Claim 34 is rejected for substantially the same reasons as claim 1.

Claim 35 is rejected for substantially the same reasons as claim 34; furthermore, the devices selected in claim 35 were well known in the art at the time of the invention.

Claim 36 is rejected for substantially the same reasons as claim 1.

Claim 37 is rejected for substantially the same reasons as claim 2.

Claim 38 is rejected for substantially the same reasons as claim 36.

Claim 39 is rejected for substantially the same reasons as claim 38 furthermore, the devices selected in claim 39 were well known in the art at the time of the invention.

Art Unit: 2162

Claim 40 is rejected for substantially the same reasons as claim 1.

As per claim 43, Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “A method comprising: receiving a selection of a first product from a vending machine; presenting an offer for a second product in lieu of the first product, in which the second product is more profitable than the first product; determining if the customer has accepted the offer; and dispensing the second product if the customer has accepted the offer.”

Malaspina does not explicitly show: “dispensing the second product if the customer has accepted the offer. . . .” even though Malaspina suggests same.

Bernard (FIG. 24; FIG. 25; and FIG. 44) shows elements that suggest: “dispensing the second product if the customer has accepted the offer. . . .”

Bernard proposes optional product dispensing modifications that would have applied to the system described by Malaspina. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the modifications of Bernard with the system of Malaspina because such combination would have provided a means of “*browsing . . . to learn more about products which are popular or in great demand but about which the customer may not be aware.*” (See Bernard (col. 4, ll. 32-34)).

Art Unit: 2162

As per claim 44, Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “A method comprising: receiving a selection of a first product from a vending machine . . . determining a second product . . . displaying an offer to for[sic] the second product instead of the first product . . . receiving an acceptance of the offer; and dispensing the second product.”

Malaspina (col. 1, ll. 55-60; FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “determining a profit margin of the first product . . . determining a second product that has a profit margin greater than the profit margin of the first product. . . .”

Malaspina does not explicitly show: “receiving an acceptance of the offer; and dispensing the second product.”

Bernard (FIG. 24; FIG. 25; and FIG. 44) shows elements that suggest: “receiving an acceptance of the offer; and dispensing the second product.”

Bernard proposes optional product dispensing modifications that would have applied to the system described by Malaspina. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the modifications of Bernard with the system of Malaspina because such combination would have provided a means of “*browsing . . . to learn more about products which are popular or in great demand but about which the customer may not be aware.*” (See Bernard (col. 4, ll. 32-34)).

Art Unit: 2162

CLAIM REJECTIONS — 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

5. Claims 41 & 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Malaspina in view of Bernard.

As per claim 41, Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 4; FIG. 5; FIG. 7; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “A vending machine apparatus for presenting alternate product choices to a customer, comprising a vending machine capable of distributing a plurality of product types, said vending machine having an input device for receiving at least a product selection from said customer . . . a microprocessor . . . controlling the distribution of said plurality of product types by said vending machine according to the method of claim 40 . . . being in electrical communication with said input device, and, being responsive to said input device. . . .”

Malaspina does not explicitly show: “a message output device responsive to said microprocessor, said message output device for presenting said alternate product offer message to[sic] customer. . . .” even though Malaspina suggests same.

Bernard (the ABSTRACT; FIG. 13; FIG. 24; FIG. 25; FIG. 44; col. 3, ll. 29-67; and col. 5, ll. 24-67) shows elements that suggest: “a message output device responsive

Art Unit: 2162

to said microprocessor, said message output device for presenting said alternate product offer message to[sic] customer. . . .”

Bernard proposes alternate product message modifications that would have applied to the system described by Malaspina. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the modifications of Bernard with the system of Malaspina because such combination would have provided a means of *“browsing . . . to learn more about products which are popular or in great demand but about which the customer may not be aware.”* (See Bernard (col. 4, ll. 32-34)).

As per claim 42, Malaspina in view of Bernard shows the vending machine of claim 41. (See the rejection of claim 41 supra).

Malaspina (FIG. 2; FIG. 3; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “said message output device includes at least one element selected form the group consisting of an . . . LED display, an LCD display. . . .”

Malaspina does not explicitly show: “said message output device includes at least one element selected form the group consisting of a video display device . . . a touch sensitive video display device, or a printer. . . .” even though Malaspina suggests same.

Bernard (the ABSTRACT; col. 23, ll. 55-67; col. 59, ll. 27-35; FIG. 4; FIG. 6; FIG. 24; FIG. 25; FIG. 44; col. 3, ll. 29-67; and col. 5, ll. 24-67) shows elements that suggest: “said message output device includes at least one element selected form the

Art Unit: 2162

group consisting of a video display device . . . a touch sensitive video display device, or a printer. . . .”

Bernard proposes input device modifications that would have applied to the system described by Malaspina. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the modifications of Bernard with the system of Malaspina because such combination would have provided a means of “*browsing . . . to learn more about products which are popular or in great demand but about which the customer may not be aware.*” (See Bernard (col. 4, ll. 32-34)).

RESPONSE TO ARGUMENTS—707.07(f)

6. The following is an except of MPEP 707.07(f): “Where the [A]pplicant traverses any rejection, the examiner should . . . take note of the [A]pplicant’s argument and answer the substance of it.”

Applicant's arguments filed 07/24/2002 in “RCE” (paper #15), the arguments have been fully considered but they are not persuasive for the following reasons:

As per claims 34, 38 and 41, and as per Applicant’s remarks (paper #15, p. 2) it is well settled that “[the] test for a proper dependent claim . . . is whether the dependent claim includes every limitation of the claim form which it depends.” (See MPEP 608.01 (n) III. INFRINGEMENT TEST (August 2001) P. 600-77).

Art Unit: 2162

As per claims 34 & 38, in this case, the dependent claims 34 & 38 recite “computer instructions defining the method of Claims 1 & 36 respectively; therefore by defining (i.e., by definition of) the method of the claims to which they refer back to, they include every limitation of the claims to which they refer back to; therefore, said claims are proper dependent claims.

As per claim 41, in this case, dependent claim 41 recites “a microprocessor . . . controlling . . . according to the method of Claim 40. . . .” i.e., by referring back to claim 40, claim 41 includes every limitation of the claim 40; therefore, claim 41 is a proper dependent claim.

In response to Applicant’s remarks (paper #15, p. 2) as per the rejection of claim 41, the instant Office Action complies with Applicant’s seasonable challenge of Official Notice evidence cited in Office Action (paper#7) and the prior Office Action (paper#11).

As per Applicant’s remarks (paper #15, pp. 2-8) and as per the Official Notice rejections of claims 4-6, 8-12, 14-26 & 31-33, said remarks are moot because it is well settled that “Applicant must seasonably challenge well known statements and statements based on personal knowledge when they are made. . . . A challenge to the taking of judicial notice must contain adequate information or argument to create on its face a reasonable doubt regarding the circumstances justifying the judicial notice. . . . If

Art Unit: 2162

[A]pplicant does not seasonably traverse the well known statement during examination, then the object of the well known statement is taken to be admitted prior art. *In re Chevenard*, 139 F.2d 71, 60 USPQ 239 (CCPA 1943). A seasonable challenge constitutes a demand for evidence made as soon as practicable during prosecution. Thus, [A]pplicant is charged with rebutting the well known statement in the next reply after the Office action in which the well known statement was made ” (See MPEP 2144.03 Reliance on Common Knowledge in the Art or ‘Well Known’ Prior Art 8 ed., August 2001, pp. 2100-129 and 2100-130).

In this instance, Applicant’s Response (Amendment A, paper#9) failed to demand a reference in support of the Official Notice evidence cited by the Examiner in Office Action (paper#7) concerning the obviousness rejections of claims 4-6, 8-12, 14-26 & 31-33. Furthermore, Applicant’s Response (Amendment A, paper#9) lacked adequate information or argument to create on its face a reasonable doubt regarding the circumstances justifying the Official Notice and thereby failed to seasonably challenge the Official Notice rejections of claims 4-6, 8-12, 14-26 & 31-33. Therefore, the well known Officially Noted statements concerning the obviousness rejections of claims 4-6, 8-12, 14-26 & 31-33 are taken to be admitted prior art, and no further reference or references are required to be presented by the Examiner in support of the Official Notice evidence relied upon in the obviousness rejections of claims 4-6, 8-12, 14-26 & 31-33.

Art Unit: 2162

As per as per claims 34, 36, 38 & 40 and as per Applicant's remarks (paper #15, pp. 8-10) which alleges that neither Malaspina nor Bernard shows "an 'alternate product offer. . .'", the Examiner proffers that Bernard (the ABSTRACT; FIG. 13; FIG. 24; FIG. 25; FIG. 44; col. 3, ll. 29-67; and col. 5, ll. 24-67) proposes alternate product message modifications that would have applied to the system described by Malaspina. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the modifications of Bernard with the system of Malaspina because such combination would have provided a means of "*browsing . . . to learn more about products which are popular or in great demand but about which the customer may not be aware.*" (See Bernard (col. 4, ll. 32-34)).

As per claim 41 and as per Applicant's remarks (paper #15, p. 10) concerning Official Notice evidence with regard to the obviousness rejection of claim 41 and subsequently claim 42, said remarks are moot based on the new ground of rejection for said claims. (See the rejection of claims 41 & 42 supra).

As per "Dependent Claims" and as per Applicant's remarks (paper #15, p. 11) that "these claims are patentable. . ." this argument amounts to a general allegation that the claims define a patentable invention without specifically pointing out how the language of the claims patentably distinguishes them from the references.

Art Unit: 2162

As per “No Motivation to Combine Malaspina and Bernard” and as per Applicant’s remarks (paper #15, p. 11), the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, the prior Office Action relies upon motivation found in the references themselves, as well as the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art.

As per Applicant’s remarks (paper #15, p. 11) that “The two references are not analogous. . . .” it has been held that a prior art reference must either be in the field of Applicant’s endeavor or, if not, then be reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the Applicant was concerned, in order to be relied upon as a basis for rejection of the claimed invention. See *In re Oetiker*, 977 F.2d 1443, 24 USPQ2d 1443 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, the prior Office Action both Malaspina and Bernard are reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the Applicant is concerned.

As per Applicant’s remarks (paper #15, p. 11) concerning that “Claims 43 and 44 . . . are patentable. . . .” and that the Examiner does not indicate where the elements and limitations of “presenting an offer for a second product in lieu of a first product which is

Art Unit: 2162

selected. . . .” are taught in the references, the Examiner proffers that Malaspina (FIG. 1; FIG. 2; FIG. 3; FIG. 5; the ABSTRACT; col. 2, ll. 44-67; col. 3, ll. 1-56; col. 4, ll. 33-45; and col. 6, ll. 15-17) shows elements that suggest: “presenting an offer for a second product in lieu of the first product which is selected. . . .”

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL

Applicant's demand for prior art reference evidence in support of Official Notice evidence presented in the prior Office Action necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Art Unit: 2162

CONCLUSION

7. Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Box AF

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Washington, D.C. 20231

Any response to this action may be sent via facsimile to either:

(703) 746-7239 or (703) 872-9314 (for formal communications EXPEDITED PROCEDURE)

or (703) 746-7239 (for formal communications marked AFTER-FINAL) or

(703) 746-7240 (for informal communications marked PROPOSED or DRAFT).

Hand delivered responses may be brought to:

Seventh floor Receptionist
Crystal Park V
2451 Crystal Drive
Arlington, Virginia.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the Examiner should be directed to John L. Young who may be reached via telephone at (703) 305-3801. The Examiner can normally be reached Monday through Friday between 8:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

If attempts to reach the Examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the Examiner's supervisor, Eric Stamber, may be reached at (703) 305-8469.

Serial Number: 09/345,092

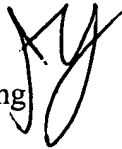
(Walker et al.)

41

Art Unit: 2162

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-3900.

John L. Young



Patent Examiner

October 14, 2002



MELANIE A. KEMPER
PRIMARY EXAMINER